

New Podcast Series from WorkingNation and WABE Studios Exposes the Hidden Economics of Motherhood

Uncovering the real price of failing to support working mothers.

LOS ANGELES, AZ, UNITED STATES, June 30, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ --

America's workforce is facing a critical shortage of skilled talent. Yet millions of working mothers remain underutilized—not due to a lack of ability, but because outdated policies, rising care costs, and rigid cultural expectations make it nearly impossible to balance work and caregiving. This lack of support is contributing to declining birth rates and exposing deeper cracks in the U.S. economy.

To examine what's at stake and what needs to change, [WorkingNation](#), in partnership with [WABE](#) Studios, is launching a five-part podcast series titled: *The Work Behind The Work*. Known for its journalism spotlighting workforce challenges and solutions, WorkingNation takes a candid look at how caregiving responsibilities shape the professional lives of working moms. The series explores why so many women struggle to grow their careers—and how stronger support systems can strengthen families, businesses, and the economy as a whole.

Hosted by Melissa Panzer, Emmy Award-winning executive producer at WorkingNation and a mother herself, the podcast features economists, sociologists, business leaders, and advocates. It highlights personal stories of women whose professional potential is constrained by outdated policies, lack of flexibility, and inadequate workplace support, showing the ripple effects on workforce participation, family stability, and overall economic growth.

"At WorkingNation, many of the people leading our work are working mothers. They bring



exceptional talent, insight, and a firsthand understanding of the challenges this series explores. Supporting them, and working moms across the country, is not just the right thing to do. It is essential to building a resilient and inclusive workforce.” - Art Bilger, founder and CEO of WorkingNation

Each episode connects personal experience to larger systemic issues, making the case that this isn’t just a parenting issue—it’s an economic one.

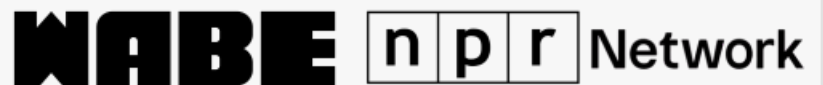
"Working mothers are a critical talent pool with invaluable experience and skills. Yet too often, they’re held back, not because they lack ambition or ability, but because our systems fail to support them. If businesses want a stronger, more resilient workforce, supporting working moms must be a priority." - Joan Lynch, series executive producer.

The collaboration builds on a successful previous partnership between WorkingNation and WABE-TV, whose program Breaking Barriers: Disabilities and Employment was honored with a Southeast Emmy Award.

“As someone who works in storytelling every day, I know the power of a story that hits close to home, and The Work Behind the Work does just that. This series captures the real, daily juggling act so many moms in and out of the workforce face, and it shines a light on why the system needs to change. At WABE, we’re proud to help bring these voices to the forefront and share a podcast that so many families will see themselves in.” - Daniel Keller-Bradshaw, vice president of WABE Studios

This series was made possible thanks to the continued generosity of [Lumina Foundation](#).

EPISODE GUIDE:



June 30th: Trailer

A preview of The Work Behind the Work and the questions driving the series

July 8th: The Motherhood Penalty

Exploring unpaid labor, hidden economic costs, and how caregiving impacts women's careers

Featuring: Josie Cox, journalist and author; Vicky Pryce, economist

July 15th: Cognitive Labor

How routines and mental load disproportionately fall on mothers—even in “equal” households

Featuring: Barbara J. Risman, sociologist; Katie E. Starkweather, anthropologist

July 22th: The Traditional Housewife

A look at the historical and cultural forces that shaped modern family expectations

Featuring: Lisa Selin Davis, author; Chris Herbst, economist; Barbara J. Risman, sociologist

July 29th: The Winner-Take-All Economy

The obstacles working moms face in advancement and workplace culture

Featuring: June Carbone, Naomi Cahn, and Nancy Levit, co-authors of Fair Shake

August 5th: A Marshall Plan for Moms

Realistic, scalable solutions to support mothers and caregivers in the workplace

Featuring: Reshma Saujani, Moms First; Eve Rodsky, author; Josie Cox, journalist; Caitlin Codella Low, Bipartisan Policy Center; June Carbone, professor

About WorkingNation

Since 2016, WorkingNation is a media organization dedicated to raising awareness about America's workforce challenges and solutions. Through documentaries, digital content, and high-impact storytelling, WorkingNation spotlighted the people and programs preparing workers for the jobs of the future, connecting them to sustainable careers, and advancing a more inclusive economy.

About WABE

WABE is Atlanta's original, independent, non-profit source for news and local stories and the choice for NPR and PBS. Our stations deliver fact-based journalism and inclusive, engaging, cultural content that informs, inspires, reflects, and empowers the millions who call the Greater Atlanta area home. WABE's programs, podcasts, and events make Atlanta's stories and storytellers accessible and relevant across various platforms for our diverse audience. WABE original programming, along with national NPR and PBS content, is available on WABE 90.1FM, WABE.org, WABE TV (PBS-30), and WABE-HD1/WABE-HD2, as well as streaming on the WABE

Mobile App, Hulu + Live, YouTube TV, Chromecast, PBS.org, Local Now, Roku, Android TV & mobile, Amazon Fire TV & tablets, iOS, tvOS, and Android TV live streams. Visit wabe.org for more information.

About Lumina Foundation

Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation in Indianapolis committed to making opportunities for learning beyond high school available to all. We envision higher learning that is easy to navigate, delivers fair results, and meets the nation's talent needs through a broad range of credentials. We work toward a system that prepares people for informed citizenship and success in a global economy.

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